14 Days Until LWV-VA Council Meeting Registration Deadline

This is a reminder that reservations for the Council must be made by May 20 to ensure your spot at this important meeting on June 4, in Richmond. Although only delegates can vote during the one-hour business meeting, exciting sessions are planned to help Leagues deal with what matters.

You won’t want to miss the panel discussion - “Millennials Matter.” Young civic activists will lead a discussion on what the League can do to engage their generation as allies in our mission and what tools we need to master in order to communicate. The panel will include Alex Chandler, State Director of Inspire Virginia; Rachel Beatrice, Capital News Service; Emily Imhoff, with NOW and WIN; Brandon Duong, VCU student activist.

Also planned are discussions on Voting Matters, Social Media Matters, Program Matters, Membership Matters and Board Orientation Matters—all topics needed to keep your League on top of these rapidly changing times.

Join us in Richmond for this exciting, informative event that provides an excellent opportunity to network with Leaguers from around the state.

Click Here for a copy of the Registration Form to sign up.

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May 20 Council Sign-Up Deadline Coming Up

This year’s Council meeting is going to include a panel of millennials offering Leaguers insights into how their generation thinks and works. Hope you can attend Council. It will be worthwhile. Panelists are:

Rachel Beatrice from Charlottesville is a member of the staff of VCU’s Capital News Service and covered the VA General Assembly this spring. She came to the attention of Leaguers when she covered several Women’s Legislative Roundtables and wrote for a variety of media about issues raised there.

Alex Chandler is the State Director for Inspire Virginia. Inspire Virginia is a nonpartisan program funded by Project High Hopes, a national 501(c)(3). Since launching in August 2015, Inspire worked with students in over 20 high schools across the Commonwealth to register over 1700 high school voters.

Emily Imhoff is a recent graduate of the University of Cincinnati, where she studied international affairs with a focus on international conflict. Emily coordinated a number of intersectional feminist and social justice organizations on campus, focusing largely on women’s leadership, gender-based violence survivor advocacy, consent education, and racial justice.

Brandon Duong is a third-year college student studying Urban and Regional Planning at Virginia Commonwealth University. Born to two Vietnamese refugees fleeing war, he saw the traumas of war and oppression through the painful stories that family and community members would share. Because of
The recent initiative by Gov. McAuliffe to grant voting rights to a large number of ex-offenders has raised a number of questions from Virginia Leaguers. Because this has now become mired in partisan politics, with one party threatening to bring a lawsuit challenging the governors’ right to do this, some Leaguers have become concerned about taking an active role.

However the League’s commitment to the principles involved in this action did not start with this initiative. LWVUS’s position on voting reads as follows: “…voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed.”

More specifically, embedded in “Positions for Action in Brief,” the statement of LWV-VA’s adopted positions, is the following:

Read More
Supreme Court Rules in Virginia Redistricting Suit

According to the Richmond Times dispatch, "The Supreme Court on Monday left in place a lower court’s decision that redraws some of Virginia’s congressional districts and creates the possibility of electing a second black U.S. House member from the commonwealth.

"The justices ruled unanimously that three Virginia Republican congressmen who challenged the lower court’s decision — Reps. J. Randy Forbes, Rob Wittman and Dave Brat — do not have the necessary legal right to proceed. Without that, the court dismissed the appeal." LWVUS had signed on to this as a friend of the court. Read More.

Please Note: Residents of the central Virginia districts affected (districts 1, 2, 3, 4, & 7) need to check their Congressional Districts and who is running as some may be surprised they are in a new district. It is not clear if ELECT will send them new registration letters.

LWV Interest Meeting Held in Fredricksburg
A standing room only audience turned out to learn more about the League and expressed a desire to organize a League Fredericksburg area. Forty people attended the event held in the regional library and listened to Anne Sterling, Local League Outreach Director, review the purpose of the League and its mission. “I am so excited with the turnout and the interest and enthusiasm of this group,” stated Sterling.

An organizational meeting is scheduled for June. In the meantime, several attendees have already become members.

State Board members Carol Noggle (PWC) and Lois Page (FA) are shown answering specific questions from two attendees.
Voting Rights Group Successfully Intervenes in Virginia Voter Purge Case

League of Women Voters of Virginia said proposed purging would have threatened eligible voters in November election.

At Friday’s federal court hearing in Alexandria, Virginia, the League of Women Voters of Virginia’s request to intervene in an ongoing legal battle there was granted. A self-styled “election integrity” group had sued the city’s registrar in an attempt to pressure her into conducting an unnecessary and improper purge of the voter rolls in advance of the 2016 election.

To protect eligible voters from unlawful disenfranchisement, the League had also filed a proposed legal brief supporting the City of Alexandria’s effort to dismiss the plaintiffs’ claim that the city’s process for updating its voter rolls violates the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA).

Click Here to read the full text of the press release, or copy the following link into your browser:

Washington County MAL is Approved by LWVUS to Become an Official League

The National Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters gave unqualified approval to the application submitted by MAL President Merry Jennings for Washington County. Seven years in the process of forming, Jennings stated “This is a dream come true for us. Many people have sacrificed time and energy to get to this point. It is with a great sense of pleasure for me to say thank you to all those who helped make this day happen.” Washington County joins 11 other Leagues in Virginia.

Photo shows Co-President Lois Page approving the application on behalf of the state League, while Co-President Dianne Blais and Washington County MAL President Merry Jennings look on.

Arlington League Wins “Strengthening Democracy” Award at LWVUS Convention

LWV of Arlington won national recognition at the banquet the final night of the US League’s convention at the Wardman Park Marriott Saturday. Their award was for “innovative democracy-building programs that demonstrate successful League activities where the engagement of recruitment of strategic partners and/or new volunteers within the community has grown, especially in order to better serve key underrepresented groups such as young voters and new citizens.”

They were in competition with finalists New Orleans (LA), Sioux Falls (SD), and Dallas (TX).

Led by president Kristin Gross, the Arlington Leaguers worked with Inspire Virginia to set up a student led program to register a large number of high school students in their community schools. Goss gives credit to incoming president Kathy Matusiak and Don Gurley for their leadership. A complete description of their efforts will appear on our website in a few weeks.

Photo shows (l to r) Gurley, LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara, Matusiak and LWVUS Executive Director Wylecia Wiggs Harris.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization encouraging the informed and active
participation in government. It influences public policy through education and advocacy.

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- A panel on Protecting the Right to Vote and Expanding the Electorate
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- Peter Overby, Correspondent for National Public Radio
- Joe Goldman, President of the Democracy Fund
- Address by New LWVUS President Chris Carson
- Ari Berman, speaker at final banquet

Virginia Delegation to LWVUS Convention 2016

Gathers Valuable League Information, Insights

Twenty-four attentive Virginia Leaguers took notes, offered examples, asked questions and generally spent 4 action-packed days at the mid June nation-wide convention. Summaries of various break-out sessions will be shared in future issues, but thanks to the note taking skills of Linda Garvelink of the Va. Board and Falls Church, and Martha Cooper, also of Falls Church, a detailed account, called a “Delegates’ Diary,” of the major speakers and business dealt with at the Plenary Sessions has been placed on the state website.
extended version of the summaries below can be found in the linked full-version "Diary" at the day and time indicated.

We give you just a taste of what some of the major addresses included:

Jennifer Lawless, Director, Women & Politics Institute, American University spoke on Engaging Millennials in our Elections. In a book she wrote with another professor called Running From Office, she found that fewer than 1 in 5 people trust members of Congress and 89% of young people say they will never run for office. She feels the political dysfunction of our time will have political consequences for future generations. (Read more: page 1, Friday morning.)

Amanda Taub, Vox News and The New York Times: Understanding American Authoritarianism: “What on earth is going on?” in this election cycle. Ms. Taub addressed the “Rise of American Authoritarianism.” There has been a slow change in the electorate toward acceptance of, and even desire for, an authoritarian candidate. This happens, historically, when the status quo is threatened; “sick candidates,” who appeal to out-groups, can thrive and rise. (Read more: page 1, Friday morning.)

A panel on "Protecting the Right to Vote and Expanding the Electorate” included Kristen Clark, president, National Lawyer’s Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, who pointed out racist and sexist voting policies such as in Texas where gun permits can be used as a voter ID, but only 6 percent of African-Americans and 24 percent of women have gun permits. Arturo Vargas, Executive Director of National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) feels that Latino voters have been facing voting challenges recently when they are likely to make a difference, but their registration rates are painfully low. Christine Chen, Executive Director of Asian Pacific Islanders American Vote (APIAVote) says her constituents are the fastest growing population in the U.S., but with the lowest registration rates. Like Latinos, they are not being targeted in registration drives. (Read more: page 2, Friday morning.)

Executive Director Wyclecia Wiggs Harris stressed the need for LWV to CHANGE to meet current needs. We must evolve and redefine our future. We have to embrace change and engagement, we must diversify our membership and reach rising voters. We must adopt communication methods that have been shaped by the new generation. We must use technology! (Read more: page 2, Friday morning.)

Peter Overby, Correspondent for National Public Radio, speaking on “Money in Politics,” pointed out that Super Pacs are not supposed to be coordinated with the candidate’s campaign – but they are. It’s very coincidental how similar Super Pac and campaign ads and activities are considered “no coordination.” Super Pacs enabled “minor” candidates to stay in 2016 race longer. Supreme Court, in Citizens United decision did not see that corruption and influence would come with Independent Expenditures. Justice Kennedy, who wrote the assent, said that corporations should disclose political expenditures
so investors could determine the value of the company’s contributions to candidates to their
investment in the company. (Read more: page 5, Friday afternoon.)

**Joe Goldman, President of the Democracy Fund**, addressed "Our Democracy – Complex
Systems and Major Forces at Play in 2016." The Democracy Fund was established by the
founder of EBay; he has invested $30 million to date. The purpose is to “take back our
Republic,” the public needs to regain faith in our public institutions/system. The Democracy
Fund provides funding to a wide variety of organizations, even CATO, when the purpose is
to enlighten fairly. (Read more: page 6, Saturday Morning.)

**Address by New President Chris Carson.** Next two years will be time of “engagement.”
LWVUS will work to improve the redistricting process and continue the fight to halt the
influence of Big Money in Politics, including helping state & local Leagues propose and
push for limits on campaign financing at state and local levels. We will continue to work to
protect the election process. LWVUS will continue to help state & local Leagues develop
new leaders and expand memberships through the Membership & Leadership Development
(MLD) program. (Read more: page 8, Sunday morning.)

**Ari Berman, speaker at final banquet,** spoke on his latest book *Give Us the Ballot, the
Modern Struggle for Voting Rights in America*. He tells the story primarily of what has
happened with voting rights since 1965, hard upon the passage of the Civil Rights Act that
attempted to protect the rights of minorities. Those rights have been under attack every
since. Especially telling was his tracing of the record of Chief Justice Roberts, who worked
in opposition to expanded voting rights from early in his career. (This talk was not
summarized in the Diary. Transcripts of convention speeches are reportedly on the
LWVUS website—somewhere. Interested parties should read this arresting book.)